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**NSC BRIEFING NOTE**

**SOVIET ICBM AND OTHER BALLISTIC MISSILES**

A. The intelligence community has re-evaluated its estimate\* on Soviet ICBM program, advancing the date of probable first operational capability (from 1960-1961) to some time in the period mid-1958 to mid-1959.

1. This date refers to availability of up to 10 prototype ICBMs with high-yield nuclear warheads in hands of trained personnel at completed launching facilities.

2. Characteristics will probably approximate 5,500 nautical miles maximum range, accuracy about 5 nautical mile CEP, system reliability of about 50 percent. Possible that maximum range will be somewhat shorter (Army holds at least 3,800-4,500 miles) but in any case sufficient to reach the US.

\* 11-6-54 of Sept 1954  
11-5-57 of Mar 1957

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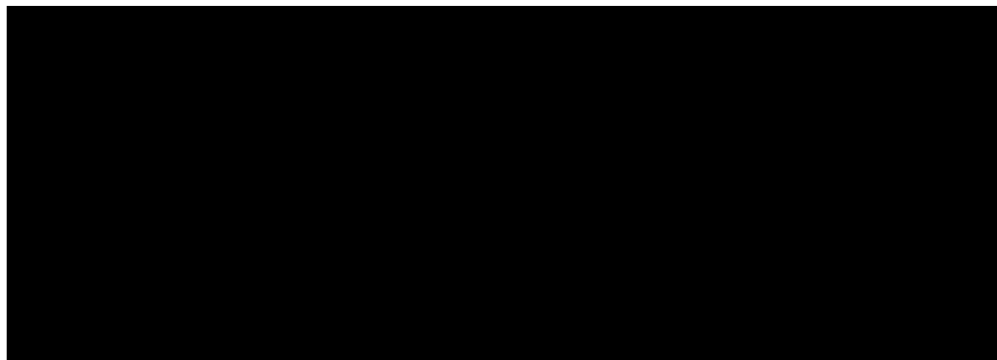
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3. Projecting forward, we estimate that operational capability with 100 ICBMs could probably be achieved about one year after first operational capability, and with 500 ICBMs about two or at most three years after first operational capability (i.e., mid-1960 to mid-1962).

B. Re-evaluation is result of impressive Soviet testing since mid-1957, weighed against background of Soviet ballistic missile experience and our estimate that ICBM program has very high priority if not actually on "crash" basis.

1. Basic propulsion systems (100-ton thrust engines) probably available since 1952 and Soviets now well on their way toward solution of other ICBM problems.



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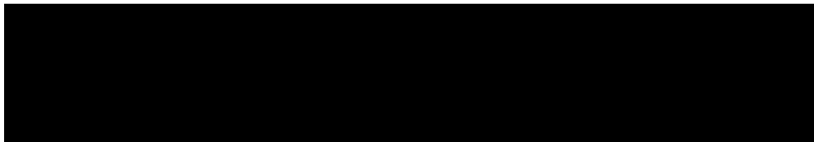


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C. IRBM of 1,000 nautical mile maximum range could probably become operational in 1958, based on scaling up of 700-mile missile which we believe probably operational since 1956.

1. Our current belief is that Soviets probably temporarily satisfied with 1,000 mile missile as their IRBM and are placing top priority on achieving operational ICBM.

2. Many of the present targets on Eurasian periphery which we believe the USSR would wish to attack would be within range of a 700-mile missile fired from within the Bloc; most would be within range of a 1,000-mile missile.

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Previous National Intelligence Estimates on First Operational Availability of Soviet ICBM

5 October 1954: "....it probably could have ready for series production in about 1963 (or at the earliest possible date in 1960) an ICBM with a high yield nuclear warhead and a CEP of roughly 5 nautical miles."

20 December 1955: "We now estimate that as soon as 1960-1961 the USSR could have ready for series production an ICBM of 5500 nautical mile range, with a large yield nuclear warhead and a CEP of roughly 5 nautical miles."

12 March 1957: Same estimate as in December 1955, noting that at this date (1960-1961) first unit could probably be ready for operation with prototype ICBMs.

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